

[James Begley]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE N.Y.

NAME OF WORKER B. Hathaway

ADDRESS 356 West 123d Street, N.Y.C.

DATE December 20, 1938

SUBJECT Folk Lore - James Begley

1. Date and time of interview December 19, 1938
2. Place of interview Union Square
3. Name and address of informant James Begley, Jersey City. [Habitue?] of Union Square.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Same as in Jacob Stein, q.v.

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NEW YORK

FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE N.Y.

NAME OF WORKER B. Hathaway

ADDRESS 356 West 123d Street, N.Y.C.

DATE December 20, 1938

SUBJECT Folk Lore - James Begley

1. Ancestry Irish
2. Place and date of birth Ireland
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates Lowell, Mass., about the time of the war. New York and Jersey City since that time.
5. Education, with dates Grammar school grade, in Ireland.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant Tall, more than six feet; stooped, jolly, good-natured, stutters when excited, has lost his grip in the struggle of life and doesn't care. Lives just any way.

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Noticably ragged, even in a section of the poorly-clad, unwashed, down at the heels, usually

10. Other Points gained in interview 2 a wide rip in his coat, trousers inches too short, shoes that don't always match.

Traces his English name — correctly or incorrectly — back to Cromwell's Puritan invasion of Ireland, when many of his followers remained in Ireland, married Irish wives and became, in effect, Irish.

Works on the docks, on the New York side, once in a great while, and does not scruple, according to his own story, to walk off with his capacious pockets stuffed with bananas, oranges and vegetables.

Has a bias against the church that brought him up. Drifted away from it and thinks it works against him. Was a policeman in Lowell, Mass. Lost it. Not orthodox enough, he says. Now lives in Jersey City. Frequents Union Square, to and from which he bums his way across the Hudson River ferries on passing vehicles. Has unorthodox views, hates the boss of Jersey City. His fellow Irish religionists call him "crazy," because he condemns, often in obscene rhymes, the autocracy of his own church.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER B. Hathaway

ADDRESS 356 West 123d Street, N.Y.C.

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DATE December 20, 1938

SUBJECT Folk Lore - James Begley

Knows Celtic verse. Mostly to be found leaning against the park fence, quoting it. Also knows homely remedies for physical ailments.

"If iver yi have anny wur-rums," he would say —

———— Wur-rums

If iver yi have anny wur-rums, nothing is bettther than gargle yer t'roat wid salt watter. Nothi' is bettther. Whin yi git up av a mornin', the firrst t'ing use a little salt watter to wash the mouth out, swalley a little, an' it will kill all the monsther (worms).

Al'ys be careful to swalley a little. On'y a little will do. Ivery mornin' whin yi git up. An' yi'll never be troubled wid monsther as long as ui live.....